

H.R. 2979 -- JULIA CARSON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND HEALTHY FAMILIES ACT

QUICK FACT SHEET:

The progressive scaling back of federal support to low-income Americans is taking a devastating toll on fathers, families and communities. Intervention is imperative for the well-being of our children, as well as America's global competitiveness. Wealth-building programs are needed that provide pathways to training for low-skilled fathers so they can advance to better jobs and provide for their children—who should not be sentenced to repeat another cycle of poverty.

Current socioeconomic trends call for the formulation of policies and programs for fathers and their families that are race-informed and assessed for their equitable impact in addressing the needs and circumstances of low-income and racially/ethnically diverse populations residing in disinvested communities with limited opportunities.

Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act:

- **Requires** states to assess their child support and criminal justice policies, the impact of debt, state practices related to ex-offenders and other potential barriers to healthy family formation, and to submit these findings to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (**HHS**). It would also establish grants to state commissions to review these findings and suggest possible legislative changes to state laws.
- **Establishes** three demonstration grant programs to help fund employment and training programs that would aid (among some others) noncustodial parents: (1) grants to states for court-supervised or CSE agency-supervised employment programs for noncustodial parents of children who receive TANF assistance; (2) transitional jobs programs; and (3) public-private career partnerships.
- **Reauthorizes and increases** funding for healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs and, after a certain time frame, would equalize funding for the two programs (at least \$100 million of the \$200 million grant program would have to be used for responsible fatherhood programs).
- **Eliminates** the separate 90% Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (**TANF**) work participation standard for two-parent families. Under revised law, all families with work-eligible adults would be subject to a 50% standard.
- **Prohibits** states from using the Child Support Enforcement program (**CSE**) to recover from noncustodial parents without health insurance, Medicaid costs associated with the birth of their children.
- **Provides** for the full (100%) payment of child support to the family, and require that the state disregard some child support --- at least as much as the state disregards in earnings of the family for TANF benefit and eligibility purposes.
- **Repeals** a provision of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (**DRA**) that requires certain non-welfare families to pay a \$25 fee for CSE services if at least \$500 per year is collected on behalf of the family. The bill would also permanently repeal the DRA prohibition on states from receiving federal matching funds for federal “incentive payments” reinvested in state CSE programs.
- **Requires** a study and report (conducted by HHS) related to federal and state earned income tax credit (EITC) programs and child support, and to challenges faced by legal immigrants with limited English proficiency in meeting their child support obligations.
- **Amends** the SNAP law to allow a monthly deduction/exclusion from income of 20% of all legally obligated child support payments received by a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) household from a noncustodial parent.